A SERMON OF REPENTANCE.

A very godly and profitable Sermon, preached at *Lee* in *Essex*.

By ARTHUR DENT, *Minister of Gods Word.*

Published at the request of sundry godly, and well-disposed Persons.

IONAH 2.8.

They that waite upon lying vanities, forsake their own mercie

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In Concionem *Arthuri Dent*, *G. Pudei* Carmen.

MAture reſipiſce precor, peccatáq; linque:
Qui legis, aut audis, quiſquis es, iſtud opus
Si nova peccatis peccata prioribus addes.
Olim hæc te contra Concio teſtis erit.
Hæc aliqui lecta flentes ſua crimina multum,
Mutarunt mores, & nova vita placet.

The ſame in Engliſh.

THou that doſt reade or heare this worke,
I wiſh thee to doe this:
Repent in time, and ſinne forſake,
Amend what is amiſſe.
But if thou wilt adde ſinne to ſinne,
Not minding to amend,
This Sermon ſhall a witneſſe be,
Againſt thee in the end.
Some that have heard this read of late,
Lamenting much their ſinne:
Have chang'd their former manners, and
A new life now begin.

To the Reador.

ALthough I was moſt unwilling that this poore talent and travell of mine ſhould ever have beene broached abroad, and come to light, both becauſe it may ſeeme as a candle lighted at noone-day, as alſo, becauſe many other mens doing might more worthily a great deale have beene publiſhed and committed unto letters; yet becauſe divers which heard it preached with a lively voice, were very inſtant, yea & more than importunate with me to have it publiſhed, uſing ſuch reaſons as I could not greatly gaine-ſay, I did at laſt yeeld to their requeſts: and ſo this untimely fruit is come abroad

to be ſold in open markets. Let no man therefore be offended, that I have not ſtrained my ſelfe to flye an high pitch, to foame out the froth of mans wiſedome, and to make a great ſhew of learning, by blowing the bladder of vanitie, till it burſt with ſwelling; but it is not my uſe; I ſeeke eſpecially the ſalvation of the ſimple and ignorant: and therefore ſtoope downe to their reach and capacity. Therefore I beſeech thee, gentle Reader, accept my good meaning: reade this without perjudice; like it as thou profiteſt; ſo ſhalt thou have praiſe of God, and comfort in thy Conſcience.

A SERMON of Repentance.

LVKE 13.5.

I tell you nay, but except you repent, you shall all likewise perish.

THe occasion of these words of our Lord and Saviour Iesus Christ, was, because there were certaine that shewed him the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their owne sacrifices, that is, murdered them as they were sacrificing, and so their blood was mingled with the blood of the beasts which were sacrificed. These men therefore thought that those Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they had suffred such things: and that those eightéene also, upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell and slew them, were sinners aboue all the men that dwelt in Ierusalem. Wherein they did bewray a secret corruption naturally engendred in all men: that is, very sharply to sée into the sins of others, severely to censure of them, but in the meane while to

flatter themselues, and to be blinde-fold in séeing their owne sinnes. For these men thought, because the like iudgements did not fall vpon them, therefore they were well enough, they were not so great sinners, but rather highly in the fauour of God, according as many do falsely suppose, that they are alwayes the worst sort of people whom God doth most strike and presse with his punishing hand: hauing forgotten that God doth not kæpe an ordinary rate here below, to punish every man as he is worst; or to fauour and cocker him as hée is best: but onely taketh some examples, as hée thinketh good, for the instruction and aduertisements of all others, and to be, as it were, looking-glasses, wherein euery man may sée his owne face: yea, and his owne cause handled; and that God is a seuere reuenger of sinne: that all men may learne by the example of some, to tremble and beware, lest peraduenture they be worthily constrained to kæpe their owne turnes, and to know what they haue deserued. These men which brought these newes to our Sauiour Christ, had taken forth this lesson: Whereupon our Sauiour is iustly occasioned to correct their erroneous & sinister iudgement, and to teach them that they must not reioyce at the iust punishment of others, but rather be instructed thereby to repent.

And

And further, to signifie that God doth no
alwayes most punish the most notorious offen
ders, as murtherers, théeues, robbers, whore
mongers, blasphemers, quarrellers, scoffers
and such like: But reserueth them vnto th
iudgement of the great day, and, as it were, sa
teth them against the day of slaughter, an
therefore he answereth them negatiuely, an
saith: No, or not so, but except ye repent, ye sha
all likewise perish. As if he should say, Are y
all of this opinion indéed, that onely monstrou
sinners are punished in this world, and other
let alone? Or that the Galileans, and thos
eightéene vpon whom the Tower of Siloa
fell, were greater sinners than all others? O
do you thinke because the same iudgement
haue not light vpon you, therefore you sh
steale away in the darke, and escape the iudg
ments of God? No, no, you are deceiued: Fo
I say vnto you, that except you mourne and l
ment for your sins, and fall to some agréeme
with God in time, you (I say, euen you, whi
are so ready to condemne others, and iustifi
your selues) shall not onely perish with the lik
iudgements in this present world, but be eue
lastingly condemned in the world to come. M
that our Sauiour in so saying, doth thun
downe a most dreadfull sentence vpon all ou
heads: For he concludeth and setteth downe
tha

hat all men liuing vpon the face of the earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poore, yong or old, noble or vnnoble, learned or vnlearned, simple or politcke, of what state, degrée, and condition soeuer they be; liuing & dying without Repentance, shall perish and be damned in hell fire for euer. The scriptures are full of such thunderbolts, Ioh. 3.18. He that beleeues not is damned already. And 2. Cor. 13. 5. Proue your selues, whether you are in the Faith: examine your selues: know you not your selues that Iesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Where the Apostle flatly setteth downe that all those which haue not Christ dwelling in their hearts by faith, which is the houshold-ster of Repentance, are no better then reprobates, cast-awayes, and condemned persons. But because the most people in these dayes are grossely deceiued in repentance, both concerning what it is, what it meaneth, what it worketh, what be the qualities and conditions of it, which be the causes, and which be the lets and hindrances? and also why, when, and wherefore we should repent? therefore I haue a present intent to teach, first what is Repentance: secondly, which be her qualities and effects: thirdly, when we should repent: fourthly, wherfore we should repent: and last of all, what letteth vs from repentance. Which order and me-

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thod of teaching, although some may mislike (as indeed with me it is not ordinary) yet considering the matter I haue in hand, I thinke it not inconuenient. But to the matter.

Repentance is an inward sorrowing and continuall mourning of the heart and conscience for sin, ioyned with faith, and both inward and outward amendment. Inward (I say) in changing the thoughts and affections of the heart, and outward in changing the words and workes from euill to good. This repentance, no doubt, was in David, who when he was couertly reproued by the Prophet Nathan, and his sinnes layd before his eyes, did not stubbornly defend them, and so striue against God: nor yet secretly excuse them, and daube them ouer, but cryeth out in the bitternesse of heart, I haue sinned, and thereupon made the 51. Psalme, a Psalme indeed full of dolour and heauinesse wherein the Prophet bewaileth his faults; lamenteth his sinnes, and prayeth euen for a new Heart, and a new Spirit, new thoughts, new affections, new promises of amendment of life: so that in Dauid we may see an inward sorrowing, a lasting griefe (as the Booke of Psalmes doth euery where declare, which layeth him out as it were in an Anatomy) yea, and great reformation, both in inward & outward sinnes. Here therefore behold what is Repentance.

Like-

Likewise S. Peter through infirmitie hauing denied his Lord and Maker Christ, and being pinched of his owne Conscience, and wakened with the alarme of a poore Cockes crowing, went out of the Court of Pilate, with a heauy heart weeping bitterly, and euer after stoutly professing Christ euen vnto the death. See then what is Repentance. The Prophets, in the Old Testament, exhorting the rebellious Iewes vnto Repentance, vse commonly an Hebrew Verbe, which signifies, Turne yee, or Repent yee, and come backe againe: by the which Metaphor is meant, that like as a man that is strayed farre out of his way, must returne quite backe againe the contrary way: So those that haue strayed from the way of godlinesse to the way of sinne, must come backe againe as fast as euer they went forward, and altogether change the course of their life: So that repentance is an earnest turning vnto God, with all your heart, soule, and minde. Saint Iohn Baptist, and the Apostles in the new Testament, exhorting vnto Repentance, vse the Greeke word, which signifieth a changing of the minde afterward, or after-wit: So that those which through their folly, and want of former wit, haue slipped into the deepe pit and dangerous gulfe of sinne, when they come vnto themselues, & haue recouered their wits, will

will be wise afterward, and take héed they ne
uer come there againe, according to the Pro
uerbe: The burnt Childe will take heed of th
fire. By this time, I hope you sée what is Re
pentance; It is not euery sorrow, but sorro
for sinne, not for some sinne, but for all sinne
not for an houre; but for euer: Not for a day
but continually: Not for a wéeke, but as lon
as we liue. Some thinke euery sorrow is Re
pentance, but so should Worldlings repent.
Some thinke euery little pang for sinne is Re
pentance, so should Pharaoh repent. Some
thinke all wéeping and lamenting for sinne is
Repentance, so should Esau, Iudas, and Cain re
pent. Some thinke euery little humbling o
our selues is Repentance, but so should Aha
repent. Some thinke that good workes, and
good purposes are Repentance, but so should
euery sicke man repent. Some thinke that a
reformation of words and déeds are Repen-
tance, but so should ciuill men repent. Some
thinke that to cry God mercy is Repentance, &
so should euery fole repent. You sée therefore
how many are deceiued in Repentance. But if
you will sée what it is indéed, looke backe to that
which hath béene said before: for he that will
repent in good earnest, must not hang downe
his head like a bulrush for a day onely, and so
haue done: For cry from the téeth outward

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Lord have mercy on me, and so away: but hée must make a backe-reckoning, with diligent consideration of his former life, as did the Prophet David, Psal. 119. 59. I have considered my wayes, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies. So must every one that meaneth to repent, slinke aside into some corner or out-place, that there he may have rome enough to beat his owne Conscience, and to make his Heart smart for his sinnes, by aggravation thereof, and weighing all the circumstances, as in the ninth of Daniel: The Church of God confesseth her sins, not lightly, but with wonderfull great exaggeration, and heaping up one thing to another. So that it is not enough to say, I have sinned: but to say, I have most traiterously sinned, I have most obstinately, carelesly, and rebelliously sinned: I have monstrously offended in such a place, in such a house, in such a company, on such a day, in such a corner, in the darke I committed Adultery closely, when I thought none had séene me, in such a chamber I defiled my neighbours wife, mine owne conscience doth accuse me of it: in such and such company I have béene drunke, I have spoken and railed against Gods Word. I have mocked the Preachers, I have spared no oaths nor filthy speech: and now (O Lord) Lord, what an ugly monster

and

and wretched villaine am I: Here I stand before thy presence all naked, blinde, wounded, poore, wretched and miserable, having deserued a thousand damnations, if thou wouldest enter into iudgement, and try the Law with me. Therefore I beseech thée to shew pitie and compassion vpon me. Anoint my wounds with the oyle of mercy, restore me my sight, cloath my nakednesse, enrich mé that am poore, strengthen me that am weake, helpe me that am fallen: O bid me not farewell. The infant ouer-commeth his mother with crying, the childe his father with weeping, and the seruant his master by entreaty, and wilt thou not be intreated, O Lord: Thus, I say, if euery man would speake in his conscience to God, and thus narrowly, or more narrowly examine himselfe, vndoubtedly he were in the way to Repentance.

But alas, it is a woorld to see how the blinde Buzzards, and croked Canker-wormes of this woorld go awry from this rule, deceiuing themselues with the bare title and naked name of Repentance. Many (indeed) can talke of it, but few walke in it: many speake of it, but few feele it: many describe it, but few know it. It is hid and locked vp from the World, and reuealed onely vnto Gods Children: many thinke they haue caught it,

when they haue but the shadow of it. It is so high that few can reach it: It is so deepe that few can come to the bottome of it: It is so narrow, that few can enter into it: So wide, that few can comprehend it: So slippery, that few can hold it: So secret, that few can finde it: Therefore, my deere brethren, I beseech you let vs pray vnto our God, that he would reueale vnto vs this Mystery which is hid from the world, that we may see it, and know it, finde it, and feele it to our endlesse comfort, through Christ Iesus, which grace he grant vs.

But now to the second point, concerning the qualities and fruits of Repentance: one especiall qualitie of Repentance is alwayes to bring with it remission of sinnes: For where true Repentance goeth before, there remission of sinnes must necessarily follow after: Not that repentance deserueth remission of sinnes, but because where God worketh repentance, there he pardoneth sinnes, because of his promise, as in Ezech 18.17 When the wicked turneth away from his wickednesse that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawfull and right, he shall saue his soule aliue. And againe, Isaiah 55.7. Let the wicked forsake his wayes, and the vnrighteous his owne imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord, and he will haue mercy vpon him. So here we see to whom

whom forgiuenesse of sinnes, and the mercy of God belongeth: namely to the penitent sinners, to those that leaue sin, and imbrace godlinesse, to those that forsake their owne wayes and imaginations, and turne vnto the Lord. And as for such as walke in their owne wayes, & follow the delights of sin, without any sorrow or purpose to leaue them, they haue nothing to doe with the mercy of God: and though Iesus Christ had suffered a thousand deaths (which could not be) yet shall no impenitent sinner haue remission of his sins by his death, nor any other benefit of his passion: for they belong onely to his Church and chosen people here vpon earth. He therefore that is not of the Church, he that is not grafted into Christ by faith, he that is not a member of his mysticall body, can enioy nothing by Christs death: If any man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, & withereth, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they burne, Ioh. 15. 16. We read in the 29. of Deut. how God barreth all stubborne sinners from his mercy, & doth most terribly shoot out against them. He that heareth the words of this curse, and blesseth himselfe in his heart, saying; I shall haue peace although I walke according to the stubbornesse of mine own heart, thus adding drunkennes to thirst: the Lord will not be merciful vnto him, but then the wrath of

the Lord, and his iealousie shall smoake against that man, and every curse that is written in this booke shall light vpon him. So that God saith plainely, he hath no mercy for such as walke in vaine delights of sin, and in the stubbornesse of their own hearts, adding drunkennesse to thirst: that is, ioyning one horrible sin to another: yet for all that it is a wonder to see how the blinde wormes of the world deceiue themselues. For they thinke, whatsoeuer they say, whatsoeuer they doe, be it good, be it euill, whether they repent, or not repent, yet they shall bee saued by Christs death: as though they would make it a bawd to their sins, and so worke that villany against Christ; I hope to bee saued by Christs death as well as the best of them all, say some. But where is thy repentance, thou miserable wretch? Dost thou thinke that Gods mercy is common to all? and Christs death a bawd for thy sins? No, no, when it commeth to the vpshot, thou shalt hop short. For it will proue far otherwise. For thou shalt finde Gods mercy turned into iustice, and Christs death into wormewood, because thou hatedst knowledge, and chosedst not the feare of the Lord. Thus you see, my deere brethren, that repentance must needs goe before forgiuenesse of sinne, and where it leadeth not the way, there the gates of Gods mercy are shut vp: and this is the first

quality

quality of repentance. It hath also another condition, and that is, to alter and change men from that they were before, not in substance and proportion of the body, but in the qualities and conditions of the minde. For whosoeuer hath truly repented, you shall by and by see a most maruellous and wonderfull change in him, so that he will not do as he hath done, nor speake as he hath spoken, nor company as he hath companied, nor play the good fellow (as they terme it) as he was wont to doe, nor runne the same excesse of ryot as he was wont. And this is that amazeth the world, and causeth them to bristle and foam at the mouth like wilde Bores, and to speake euill of them that turne vnto God: For the world loueth his owne, and cannot abide that God should plucke one feather from his wings; but repentance doth violently pull men out of the claws of Satan, and change them from the condition of the world: for it maketh of proud, humble; of hurtfull, harmelesse; of cruell, meeke; of wolues, lambs; of lyons, sheepe; of adulterers, chaste liuers, of drunkards sober men; of swearers, reuerent speakers: of haters, friends: of despisers, imbracers: of scoffers, louers: of earthly, heauenly: Diuels, Saints, all these worketh repentance. Paul trauelled towards Damascus a Wolfe, a Persecutor, a Blood-sucker, a Ha-

ter a Despiser, but ere he came there, he was quite changed, and cleane of another minde: so mighty was he that met him in the way. When Jesus Christ sent downe the holy Ghost upon his Disciples, according to his promise, there were some scoffers at Ierusalem, which mocked and said, They are full of new wine. But the same men cried out by and by after; Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saued?

Here was a most wonderfull and sodaine change: See then the force of repentance when God striketh it into the heart of a man, and driueth the naile to the head (as they say) it effecteth that which all the wisedome and policy of man is not able to bring to passe: and when they haue prouled hither and thither, and layd their heads together, and sought all the corners of their wits, yet can they not tell which way to turne their hand, or where to begin to change the heart of a man, and to conuert him to God. Therefore repentance is stronger than all the whole world, and worketh that which all men with their naturall wits, fine heads, and deepe deuices cannot compasse: for the conuersion of a sinner is a worke supernaturall. Here then we haue a glasse to behold our selues in, whether euer we haue repented, or no: for if we finde not this change and alteration in vs, we haue not repented, and so consequently remaine vn-

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der damnation. Therefore let every man looke vnto himselfe: for marke how much he is changed and altered from his former wicked wayes, so much hath he repented. And he that is the same man he was three foure, eight, nay, thirty yeeres ago, surely surely he hath not repented, and therefore abideth in damnation. I marueil then how these men, which neuer felt any change or alteration wrought in them, nay, whose Conscience telleth them that they are not changed, nor know what it meaneth, can haue hope of saluation? vnlesse peradventure they beleeue not this doctrine, or thinke it to be false. I will send ouer these men to such as haue beene in the like case they now are, and yet thought they might do well enough for all that, although both blinde in iudgement, and corrupt in conuersation. I haue knowne and do know men, which before their conuersion and inward change, were counted as honest men as euer brake bread, and as substantiall men as any could be, and as true dealers, vpright liuers, good house-keepers, as any of their neighbours: yea, and they had the same opinion of themselues too: and yet notwithstanding when they haue felt repentance working this change and alteration in them, through the power of the Spirit, at the preaching [illegible] Word: and when they haue had new

giuen them to discerne better, and new eyes to see better; as men come out of a dampe, haue wondered and marueiled at the palpable and grosse darkenesse they were in before, and haue burst forth into these words, that they would not be in the same case they were before, no not for all the world's goods: for if they had dyed in that case, they were sure they should haue béene damned. But I pray you what case were they in before? were they not good honest men, and well accounted of, and honest liuers, and well taken whersoeuer they came? surely they were so taken in the world; but now they think farre otherwise of themselues, their eyes being opened, and their iudgements inlightned: for now they see what they saw not before: now they vnderstand that God condemneth many whom the world iustifieth. He thinketh this example should make ciuill and worldly men feare and suspect themselues, and know their owne misery before God. For those men were as good as they before their conuersion, and yet afterward confessed that they were plunged to the bottome of hell, and drowned in the depth of damnation. He that hath eares to heare, let him heare: and he that hath eyes to see, let him see: for if men will still soth themselues for all this, that they shall be saued, without feeling any change or worke of repentance, it will cost them

them full déere in the end. For Christs words will proue true, that whosoeuer repenteth not shall be damned; that is, whosoeuer doth not féele in himselfe what is repentance, and finde in himselfe the qualities thereof, shall bee condemned: for where repentance is, there be the qualities of repentance; and where the qualities be absent, there is no true repentance. So that where Christ saith, Except yee repent, yee shall all perish, it is all one as if hee had said, except you know the truth of repentance, except you can proue vnto your consciences the forgiuenesse of your sins, except yée féele a change and alteration in the bottome of your hearts for all your former lewd waies & misdemeanours, you shall surely perish and be damned. But let vs a little further search out the qualities of repentance. The Apostle in the 7. chap. of the 2. Epistle to the Corinthians, setteth downe seuen notable qualities and effects of repentance.

The first of them he nameth Care: For behold (saith he) this thing, that you have beene godly sorry, what care it hath wrought in you? this is an earnest study, and as it were a taking thought to please God: for where true repentance hath once wrought, there followeth great care afterward: care (I say) to liue in the obedience of God: care to kéepe a good conscience, care to reforme our households, care to in-

struct our wiues, children, and seruants in the knowledge of God, care to pray with them morning and euening: and generally, care to performe all duties belonging to God: So that Repentance is not a careleſſe, but a carefull thing. Let no man thinke therefore, that although they welter in carelesnesse of the flesh, and ſleepe in ſecurity all the dayes of their life, yet their repentance is good enough: yea, and though they ſpend whole daies, nights, months, and yeeres in vanities, playes & paſtime, in idleneſſe, fond delights, pleaſures & voluptuouſnes, in negligence of all duty, forgetfulneſſe of God, & contempt of all good things: yet for all this they repent for their ſins, and hope to be ſaued as wel as any other. But alas, how can theſe things ſtand together, to repent for ſinne, and to delight in ſin; to hate ſin, and to loue ſin, to fly from ſin, and to follow after ſinne? But theſe men I perceiue would faine make S. Paul a lyar: for hee ſaith, A man hath never repented, except he be carefull afterward to pleaſe God: they ſay, they doe repent, and haue repented, although they liue neuer ſo wretchedly and careleſſly. But when all licentious & lewd liuers, filthy whoremongers, beaſtly belly-gods, and careleſſe caitiffes, come to the kingdome of God, and are ſaued, then ſhall theſe men come alſo with them, to be ſaued by careleſſe repentance.

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The next quality and effect of repentance is named, Clearing of our selves, that is discharging of our selues when sinne doth accuse vs, and lay things to our charge: for when sin and Satan doe terrifie the conscience of the poore penitent sinner, by and by he flyeth vnto God, and asketh forgiuenesse through Iesus Christ, so clearing himselfe, and making his apology against sinne and Satan: like as a man that is presented into the Court vpon suspition of whoredome, or any other notorious crime, must cleare himselfe by witnesse, of that which is laid to his charge; so the conscience that is cited by Satan before the iustice and iudgement-seat of God, cleareth it selfe by repentance, and asketh forgiuenesse through Iesus Christ. So that here we may see a wonderfull fruit of a penitent conscience: it cannot abide the accusation of sinne, it cannot be quiet till it be reconciled vnto God, and so haue peace with it selfe. For this is to be noted in a godly man, that when he hath committed any sinne, and his conscience telleth him of it, by and by he feeles lead within him, and is all heauie, and cannot sleepe quietly, till he haue gotten into some corner. where he may mourn and lament to the full, & confesse and lay open himselfe vnto God, and so cleare himselfe through Iesus Christ his conscience bearing him witnesse that his sin is forgiuen. Wher-

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as contrariwise, the vngodly man, when his conscience accuseth him of sinne, he dispatcheth away all such thoughts, and treadeth them vnder-foot: and by and by calleth for a paire of Cards or Tables, or some merry companion, to driue away time, and to put out all such thoughts out of his head: and so indéed hée increaseth them more and more, and causeth them to rancke inwardly.

The third quality is called Indignation: that is, a mortall and deadly hatred against sinne, as when a man doth chadder and shake, and as it were, grinde his téeth at the remembrance of his sinnes: For this is alwaies in the penitent person, to loathe and abhorre all sinne from his heart, both his owne sinnes, and the sinnes of others, and to hate it, as the diuell himselfe, which is the author of it: and to flye from it, as from the very cut-throat and hangman of his soule, and to know it to be the onely thing that blindeth and hardneth, that separateth from God, and procureth all plagues and diseases, both of body and soule against vs. Therefore he spitteth at it in defiance, and disdaineth it, and stoppeth his nose at the stinke of it, wheresoeuer he smelleth it.

The fourth thing is Feare, which is a certaine awe of God, when a man is afraid to displease him: For the penitent person feareth alwayes,

wayes, and being prone to his owne infirmitie and weaknesse (when God never so little withdraweth his grace and leaueth him alone) worketh his saluation with feare and trembling. He will not presume vpon former grace to commit any sinne, or flatter himselfe in the mercy of God, and the things that he hath already tasted of God, to yeeld to some little sin, thinking he may do that, and be the childe of God well enough, because some of Gods children haue falne into greater: but rather he trembleth at the least motion of sinne, and is afraid of the temptation which Satan trayeth in the way, and is afraid when the temptations of sinne are vpon him, to satisfie the hunger of sinne: but rather he fighteth against sinne, when sinne fighteth against him, and presenteth the feare of God before his eyes, (as godly Ioseph in the assaults of Potiphars wife) to be, as it were, a tower of defence, and well-spring of life to auoid the snares of death.

The fifth thing is Desire, that is, hungring and thirsting after righteousnesse. For the penitent man is rauished with a desire of good things: he desireth to be euery day better than other, he desireth to leaue euery day some sinne, he desireth to pray, he desireth new knowledge, and new vnderstanding of heauenly things. He desireth to heare Sermons, and will streine

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himselfe to heare them. He desireth the company of the godly, thinking himselfe in heauen, when he is amongst them. He desireth the saluation of his very enemies, and prayeth for them. All these, and many other such like desires are in a penitent man.

The first quality is Zeale, which consisteth in the earnest embracing of vertue, and hatred of vice: so that the penitent person is zealous of euery good thing, zealous of Gods glory in all places, in all companies, and amongst all persons. He cannot abide that Gods honour should be impeached, or his name blasphemed, or his glory trampled vnder foot by wicked men: but will open his mouth to reproue the wicked and stand stoutly in the defence of Gods glory. He is not like the Atheists and dissemblers, which are alwayes as the company that is, godly amongst the godly, a Protestant amongst Protestants, wicked amongst the wicked, a Papist amongst Papists, a worldling amongst worldlings, and a swearer amongst swearers, a weathercocke that turneth with euery winde. The penitent man, I say, is not of that stampe: but he is constant and zealous in all good things: he is zealous both against the pleasures and profits of sinne: though he might winne a whole world, or pleasure himselfe neuer so much by committing sinne against God, yet he will re-

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fuſe it: for he hath learned from Chriſts mouth that it ſhall not profit a man to win the whole world, and to loſe his owne ſoule.

The laſt thing is Reuenge, that is the penitent perſon is ſo offended with the ſinne he hath committed, that he will be reuenged o himſelfe for it. As for example, if he haue offended in gluttony he will reuenge himſelfe by faſting two or three dayes after. If he haue offended in whoredome, he will be reuenged of his luſt by hairing and bridling of them euer after. If he haue offended in couetous catching and polling of other mens goods, he will be reuenged on himſelfe by reſtitution, as was godly and penitent Zacheus: and this indeed is a ſpeciall fruit of Repentance, to reforme our ſelues in thoſe things wherein we haue moſt offended. Now then we ſee (my deere brethren) what lyeth in the vertue of Repentance, and which be her inwards: ſo that we muſt néeds now come to the vnlacing and vnbowelling of Chriſts words: Except ye repent (ſaith he) yee ſhall all periſh: that is, except ye haue this forenamed Care, you ſhall all be damned: except ye haue this clearing of your ſelues, you ſhall be damned; except you haue this indignation, you ſhall be damned: except you haue this Feare, you ſhall be damned: except you haue this Deſire, you ſhall all be damned; except you haue this Zeale, you

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shall all be damned: except you haue this Reuenge, you shall all be damned. For our Sauiour Christ doth not speake of the bare name of repentance, but of repentance with her furniture and appurtenances: so that whosoeuer hath not repentance with all her qualities and effects, or at least, some measure of them, hée hath no repentance indéed, and therefore shall be damned: For except you repent, ye shall all perish. But me thinketh that I heare some man say, Here is nothing but damnation, damnation: you preach nothing but the Law, let vs heare of the Gospell. My brethren, I protest vnto you, that I speake in loue whatsoeuer I speake, I desire the saluation of you all. If I could winne but two of all this congregation, I would count my selfe happy, and thinke that God had greatly blessed my labours. And vndoubtedly, if I knew any néerer way to bring you to God, then by preaching the Law, to make you know your selues, surely, surely I would vse it: Or if I could be perswaded that the preaching of the Gospell & mercy, would do you more good, you should heare of nothing but Gospell, Gospell, Mercy Mercy. But alas, I sée that euery careleſſe and ignorant man presumeth vpon Gods mercy. I sée that euery filthy liuer, and notorious blasphemer aboseth Gods mercy, in applying it to himselfe without repen-

repentance, so that they would make Gods mercy a cloake for their sinnes: I see that euery man would faine be flattered in sinne, and heare of it no more, but haue the Gospell preached, which indeede belongeth not vnto them, continuing in their stubbornesse: But onely to the penitent sinner which forsaketh himselfe, and groaneth and panteth vnder the burthen of his sinne. Therefore when I see you humbled with the conscience of your sinnes, and groane and pant vnder the burthen of them: when I see your faces blubbered with weeping, and your hearts mollified, and sorrowing with care, then will I comfort you, and cease to preach the Law But I pray you, will you steale, murder, and commit adultery, and yet heare of mercy? Will you mocke, sweare, blaspheme, and raile, and yet heare of mercy? Will you serue sinne, hate vertue, and follow your owne lusts and yet heare of mercy? Would you haue plasters before you haue wounds? Would you haue physicke before you be sicke? Would you be let blood before you haue need?

Would you not account him a foolish Physitian, that will minister Physicke to a whole man? Would you not thinke him an vnskilfull Chirorgian that will apply a gentle salue to an old festered sore, and not rather corrosie it? Then know you, my brethren, that because you

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are full of grosse humors, you must haue strong purgation, because you are full of old festered wounds, you must haue corrosiue salues: for that is best for you. and the speediest way to recouer your health: and forasmuch as you be rough horses, you must haue a rough rider, and hard knottytimber must haue hard wedges, and hard strokes with a beetle. We preach the Law, to driue you to Christ we preach iudgement, to make you to seeke mercy: we preach damnation to bring you to saluation. But to preach mercy and forgiuenesse before men see their sins, or know their misery by the preaching of the Law, is to preach the Gospell vnprofitably: For hee that is ignorant of the Law, knoweth not what misery is in himselfe, or what mercy is in God.

What father is there, who if his child should play the stubborne boy, and disobey him in euery thing he commandeth, would stroke his head, and say he were a good boy: and not rather seuerely correct him, and whip him with a rod? What master will commend his seruant for doing what he list, and not what hee commandeth him? Euen so we may not disobey and do euill, and looke to be flattered too, and not rather chidden. Let vs know then that though God vse searing, lancing, or corsing, and searching of the bones, and other violent remedies: yet in the meane while hee procureth our health by them.

them. And let vs further vnderstand, that forasmuch as there is no other meanes to draw vs to saluation but by the clensing of all our vices, and the same clensing cannot be done but by violence, when we be warned by the doctrine of the Law, so as our owne consciences accuse vs, although we like well to be now and then flattered and soothed, yet let vs seeke to be spoken vnto earnestly, to haue our faults told vs and to be made ashamed of them, to haue our dishonesty discouered, and not desire to be pleased: For it were the next way to make vs rot in our owne filthinesse, if we should hold it in secret: and it would cost two deare the setting on, if we should be so flattered by men, and in the meane season the heauenly Iudge thunder downe vpon vs.

Therefore, when any man commeth to a Sermon, let him first and formost make his reckoning to be rebuked, as meet it is, and let him vnderstand that it is for his profit that he is not soothed. And if he haue itching eares, let him lay them away from him, assuring himselfe else, that he is fore closed, so shall he neuer receiue the doctrine to his profit and instruction: and let him bee content to haue his sores rubbed and bewrayed, that hee may be brought to that which is for his welfare. If any man please a sicke body, what shall become of him? Shall hee giue him drinke euery minute of an

houre? shall hee giue him wine, whereas hee should giue him water? shall he giue him sal-lets? it were the next way to poyson him. To bee short, it is certaine that a man doth alwaies séeke his owne death, when he would haue men to soothe him. But now, which is better, either that he which hath the ordering of a sicke man, should yéeld to all his desires, or that hee should bridle him notwithstanding that hée chase and gnash his teeth, because hée may not haue his will in his desires? You sée therefore how dangerous a thing it is to flatter and raise vp men with the preaching of Mercy, before they haue béene cast downe with the sense of Gods iudgement. Cease therefore to open your mouth to make hue and cry ouer the Country, saying: They preach nothing but the Law, the Law, Damnation, Damnation; vnlesse you will take in Christ too, and make him one of the number, and accuse him of want of wisedome, because he preacheth and cryeth out, that whosoeuer repenteth not, shall be condemned. For my part, I preach the Gospell to whom the Gospell belongeth, and the Law to whom the Law belongeth, and iudgement to whom iudgment appertaineth. And therefore hold your peace, and bee content to hée ruled by the wisedome of God. But now let vs procéede to the third generall point, which is the time when we

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shall repent. The holy Ghost in the Scripture pointeth vs to the present time, and exhorteth vs to make that the time of our repentance Ioel, 2.12. Therefore also now the Lord saith Turne you unto me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning Likewise, in the 3. to the Hebrews: Exhort one another, whilest it is called to day, lest any of you be hardned, through the deceitfulnesse of sinne. And in the same Chapter: To day if ye will heare his voyce, harden not your hearts as in the prouocation. So that now, euen now is the time of repentance.

Now while he calleth, now whilest he speaketh, now whilest he knocketh; let vs now therefore heare, let vs now therefore obey, let vs now therefore redeeme this day, this present Wednesday, which haue forepassed so many dayes, which haue so long hardned our hearts, which haue let so many good things runne out and spill besides: let vs take vp this day, and make it the day of our repentance. Although we could neuer be moued with any Sermon hitherto, yet let vs now be moued once at last. Let vs now say, This shall be my day of repentance, I will deferre it no longer, but now will I turn vnto my God, and forsake all my former wicked wayes, and mine owne imaginations: I will now change the course of my life, and beg

anew againe. I will be acquainted with Gods word, and take counsell there how to do, how to behaue my selfe in euery action, I will not only reforme my selfe but also my whole house, old, wife, children, and seruants according vnto the same. Thus, my deere brethren, I beseech you, purpose in your hearts without any further delay: and be not like to Epicures & slack-graces, which say: Youth will be youthfull, and youth will haue a course, and what should we make it so holy when we are young? tush, there needs but a sigh an houre before death, let vs be merry now, we shall neuer be younger; we will repent when we are old. As if (poore soules) they had repentance in their sleeues, and at their commandement, and that they could repent when they list. No, no these fellowes shall pay for their presumption: For God will giue them ouer to hardnesse of heart and impenitency, because they take so much vpon them, and made so long delayes, that in the meane season they might enioy the profits and pleasures of sinne. Therefore (good brethren) let vs not put it off from day to day, but let vs now seeke the Lord whilest he may be found and call vpon him whilest he is neere: let vs take time while time is, for time and tide tarrieth for no man: Let vs know this to be the time of our visitation. Our Sauiour Christ wept ouer Ierusalem, because

because they knew not the time of their visitation. Yee reproued the Iewes, because they could discerne the face of the skie, but could not discerne the signes of the times. And surely in the end it will turne to our destruction, if we will not know this to be the day of mercy, the time of grace, wherein God stretcheth forth his hand vnto vs, and wisdome cryeth out in the streets. Therefore now while we haue the light, let vs walke like children of the light: the night commeth when no man can worke. It shall be too late to call for mercy after this life, when the gates of mercy are shut vp, and repentance will be too late. Oh deere Christians, let vs remember the fiue foolish virgins, which because they ouer-slowed the time, had heauen gates barred vp against them. Let vs all remember the fearefull and dolefull example of the rich Glutton, which being in hell-torments, yelled and yelped for the least ease and helpe that might be, and could not haue it. An hundred thousand times therefore better it is for vs, to leaue our sinnes now to mourne for them now, and now to repent, than hereafter (alas) when it shal be too late: better now a great deale to take some paines, to straine our selues to leaue our sinnes and to make our hearts smart for them, than to be condemned for euer, and to cry in the bottome of hell: Wee haue wearied our

lues in the way of wickednes and destruction, and we haue gone through dangerous wayes, but we haue not knowne the way of the Lord. What hath pride profited vs? Or what profit hath the pompe of riches brought vs? All these things are passed away like a shadow, and as a Post that passed by. We haue set our selues against the children of God, we haue had them in derision, and in a parable of reproach: We fooles thought their life madnesse and their end with dishonor: but lo, they are counted amongst the children of God, & their portion is amongst the Saints: Therefore let vs know the time of our calling, and let vs not be worse than the fowls of the ayre: the Turtle, the Crane, and the Swallow, obserue the time of their comming: the husband-man taketh his time, the Pariner watcheth his tides: Therefore let vs also take the time, and turne to the Lord whilst it is called to day: Which grace God grant vs. Now let vs returne to the fourth point, concerning the causes which may moue vs vnto repentance. Here in I haue obserued nine speciall things.

First, the great mercy of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, as Rom. 9. The bountifulnesse of God leadeth vs vnto repentance, saith the Apostle: God doth continually follow vs with his mercies and benefits, both concerning our soules

soules and bodies, we haue no good thing which we haue not receiued at his hands, we hold all that we haue of him, & to him we are beholding for all: great is his mercy towards our bodies, and euery mercy & benefit either towards soule or body calleth vs to repentance: hee giueth vs meat, drinke, and cloathing, these call vs to repentance: he kæpeth vs at his owne cost and charges here below, this calleth vs to repentance: the Sun, the Moone, and the Starres call vs vnto repentance: the birds of the ayre, the fishes of the sea, and the fruits of the earth cry out vpon vs both loud and shrill, Repent, repent: all creatures moue vs vnto repentance. Our Creation calleth vs, our Redemption cryeth, our Sanctification knocketh, and our Election mooueth vs to repentance: What could God do more for his Vineyard that he hath not done? therefore let vs repent.

Secondly, the iudgements of God moue vs vnto repentance: For all the thunder-bolts, plagues and punishments which God hath shewne downe vpon obstinate sinners, from the beginning of the world, are so many warning-pæces vnto vs, to awake vs out of the dead slæpe of sin, and to prick vs to repentance. As in 1 Cor. 10. When the Apostle had cited diuers great iudgements of God against the old Israelites for diuers sinnes, he concludeth:

Now all these things came unto them for examples, and were written to admonish us upon whom the ends of the world are come. So that all the iudgements we reade of in the Scriptures, are as so many admonitions, and as it were Cart-ropes to draw vs to repentance. All the iudgements we reade of, doe see, and heare of euery day, knocke with maine strokes, beat downe-right vpon our consciences to repentance. The vgly monsters, strange births, and fiery constellations, vnknowne comets, sudden deaths, marueilous droughts, vnwonted snowes, horrible inundations, forraigne wonders, strange apparitions, threatnings of heauen aboue, with flaming and shooting fire, trembling of the earth vnder our feete, and our houses ouer our heads, as of late dayes: What are all these, but as it were great Cranes with beams and Cable-ropes to draw vs to the Lord by repentance?

Thirdly, the Word of God helpeth vs to repentance: For as God in the old time sent his Prophets both early and late, to call the rebellious Iewes to repentance, so hee sendeth abroad the Preachers and Messengers in these dayes to sound vp the Trumpet of his Word, and to ring the sweet Bels of Aaron amongst them, to awake them to repentance: but alas, how lightly are they regarded? Who heareth

their

their voyce? But surely this is the last remed
that God hath appointed: and if this will n
man vs to repentance, if this will not cure t
then are we altogether vncurable.

Fourthly, the infinite number of sinnes w
have committed, ought to be so many spurr
in our sides to pricke vs to repentance. It is suf
ficient (saith S. Peter) that wee have spent th
time of our life after the lusts of the Gentile
walking in wantonnesse of lusts, drunkennesse
gluttony, drinkings, and all abominable idol
tries. Now therefore it is time to repent. O
that men would looke backe to themselues, a
they were forty, thirty, twenty, or ten yeer
agoe! Oh that they would call to minde the
open and secret sins, and me thinketh it shou
make their hearts bleed within their bellies t
thinke vpon them: Oh that they would con
der how much time they haue mispent, an
how many good things they haue neglected, an
altogether omitted.

Fiftly, the shortnesse of our life calleth ear
nestly vpon vs to repent. The time of our life
is sixty yeares and ten, and if they liue to eigh
ty yeares, yet is his strength but labour and
sorrow, and so it is cut off quickly, and we flye
away, saith the Prophet David: we haue spent
our yeares as a thought, therefore hee addeth,
Teach us to number our dayes, that wee ma
app

ply our hearts to wiſedome. Our life for the
ortneſſe and inconſtancy of it, in the Scrip-
res, is compared to Graſſe, to a Vapour, to
moake, to a weauers Shuttle, which glideth
ay ſwiftly. Euen ſo the dayes of men paſſe
ay, no man knoweth how. Man is of a ſhort
ntinuance (ſaith Iob) and full of trouble. Er-
rience teacheth vs, that to day a man, to mor-
w none. Hence away we muſt all, here is no
ding place for vs: how ſoone wee know not.
herefore let vs repent.

Sixtly, the ſmall number of thoſe which
all be ſaved, ought to thruſt vs forward to re-
ntance. Strive to enter in at the narrow gate:
r many (I ſay unto you) will ſeeke to enter in,
d ſhall not be able, ſaith Chriſt, Luke 13.24.
nd in another place he ſaith, The gate is ſtrait,
d the way narrow that leadeth unto life, and
w there be that finde it. If men would conſider
this, it would make them looke better about
em, and try with themſelues, whether they
e of that ſmall number or no.

Seuenthly, Death threatens us, which is very
rrible to the fleſh and the remembrance of it
ry bitter to a man that is ſouſed and ſoked in
e pleaſure of this World. It flattereth no
an, it regardeth no perſon, it weigheth no
endſhip, it careth not for rewards, it is very
m, vgly, and cruell, and killeth downe-right

wher

where it bitteth. Therefore let vs repent.

Eightly, the day of judgement and secon appearing of the Son of man. He will come a theefe in the night, in the which the heauen shall passe away with a noyse, and the El ments shall melt with heat, and the earth wi the workes that are therein shall be burnt v Seeing therefore that all these things must d diuolued, what manner of persons ought yo to be in holy conuersation, and godlinesse? sai S. Peter, 2. 3. The Lord Iesus shall shew himsel from heauen with his mighty Angels in fla ming fire, rendring vengeance vnto them tha know not God, and obey not the Gospel of ou Lord Iesus Christ, saith the Apostle, 1. Thes. I saw (saith Iohn, Reu 20.) a great white throne and one that sate on it, from whose face fled a way both the earth and the heauen, and their place was no more found. And I saw the dead both great and small, stand before God, and the books were opened, and another booke was o pened, which is the Book of life, and the dead were iudged of those things which were written in the books, according to their works; and the sea gaue vp her dead which were in her, and death and hell deliuered vp their dead which were in them; and they were iudged euery man according to his works.

In these places we see both the suddenne

e fearfulnesse and glory of Christs comming. For he shall not come poore and contemptu-ly, as in the first visitation, but he shall come ry princely, royally, and triumphantly, to the eat terror of his enemies, when a consuming e shall go before him, and ten thousand thou-ds of Angels wait vpon him: at what time e Kings of the earth, and the great men, and rich men, and the chiefe Captains, and the ghty men & euery bond-man, and euery free-n shall hide themselues in dens, and among e rocks of mountaines, and say to the rocks mountaines, Fall on vs, and hide vs from e presence of him that sitteth on the Throne, d from the wrath of the Lambe: for the great y of his wrath is come, and who can stand? euel. 6. Therefore let vs repent.

The last thing is Hell torments, than the hich nothing is more intolerable. There-of saith Christ, Matth. 9. If thine hand cause ee to offend, cut it off, it is better for thee to ter into life maimed, than hauing two hands, go into hell, into the fire that neuer shall be enched, where the worme dyeth not, and the e never goeth out. The Scripture speaketh ribly to our sences concerning the estate of damned persons, calling it hell fire, damna-n, the lake that burneth with fire and brim-e for euer. In the thirteth Chapter of the

Reue-

Prophesie of Esay, it is called Tophet, and
even prepared of old, it is even prepared for th
King, he hath made it deepe and large, the bu
ning thereof is fire and much wood, the brea
of the Lord, like a riuer of brimstone, do
kindle it. These speeches are terrible in the
selues, and very marueilously amaze vs. But
I had the tongues of an hundred men, nay, of
hundred Angels, yet were I not able to utt
them, as some (one day) shall feele them, mu
lesse were you able to conceiue them. If all th
tortures and cruell torments that can be de
sed by the wit of man, were executed vpon son
one, yet were it nothing to this. Wee poo
wretches thinke there is no paine to a cholick
or a cruell ague: But if all the cholicks, ague
and other strange diseases, could possibly ligh
vpon one man, it were but a flea-biting to th
which is to come. The paine is endlesse, ease
lesse, and remedilesse. The dayes of their hel
lish torments shall neuer weare out, nor thei
yeeres come to an end the longer they continue
the lesse hope they haue: when as many yeere
be expired as there be men in the world, an
starres in the heauens: when as many thou
sand yeeres are ended, as there be stones an
sands by the sea-shore, yet still there bee te
hundred thousand times so many more to come
Those that will not now be moued in hearti

all then be crushed in pieces in feeling. All
unkards, Swearers, Whoremongers, Mis-
ers, Extortioners, Lyars Mockers Contem-
ers, Secure persons, Jolly-fellows, Roy-
ring Ruffians, Lusty bloods, the braue Lads
f the world, and all other vnbeleeuers shall
ne day be apprehended, and arraigned before
e Barre of Gods Tribunall seat, where the
aiesty of God shall stand aboue them with
naked Sword of Vengeance, and a Scepter
f Iustice: the Deuil, that old Sathan, shall
and on the one side to accuse them, and their
wne consciences on the other side to condemne
em, and the gaping gulfe of hell vnderneath
em, ready to swallow them vp for euermore.
Then shall the dreadfull sentence of eternall
oe and damnation proceed against them, Go
e cursed into hell fire, &c. There they shall
inke (as a iust recompence of their iniquity)
e bitter cup of Gods eternall wrath and in-
gnation in the kingdome of darknesse, and
the fearfull presence of Sathan, and all the
rsed enemies of Gods grace: where the dole-
ll Drumme of Gods anger shall euer sound
rough their eares, where euer shall be wee-
ng and gnashing of teeth: where shall be con-
sion, woe, and endlesse lamentation: their
ipes shall be so great, their groanes so deepe,
d their gurbolles so intolerable, that they
shall

shall grin like a dog in their infernall conv-
sions, and with howling and yelling cry out, w
and alas that euer I was borne: O that I h
neuer bæne borne, or that my mother had bor
me a toad: so, then my condition should hav
bæne better then it is: cursed was the time
was begot in, the houre I was conceiued in, an
the day I sucked my mothers paps: cursed
was alwayes, cursed I am, and cursed I sha
bée euermore: Wo, wo, how great is my to
ment? Whose heart doth not melt? Whos
eares doe not glow? Whose haire do not stan
vpon his head to heare these things? There-
fore (déere brethren) let vs repent. If the merc
of God cannot allure vs, let his iudgement
scare vs: If his iudgements cannot scare vs
let his Werd moue vs: If the Word cannot
moue vs, let our sins amaze vs: If our sins can-
not amaze vs, let the shortnesse of our life damp
vs: If the shertnesse of our life cannot dampe
vs, let the small number of those that shall bée
saued afray vs: If that cannot afray vs, let death
terrifie vs: If death cannot terrifie vs, let the
day of iudgement shake vs: If that cannot
shake vs, let hell torments shudder vs and rend
vs in pieces. For verily (my brethren) if none
of all these can preuaile, if we will not for all
this repent, but bee still obstinate, then wée
shall all perish, and bee damned, according

to

Christs words. Now let vs proceed to speake of these things which hinder from repentance: which indeed, although they be in number infinite, yet at this time I will lay forth seuen speciall lets and hinderances vnto repentance.

The first is vnbeleefe: that is, when men will not beléeue such things which are spoken and proued vnto them out of the word of God: what is it that vomiteth vp all good things, and poysoneth the very intrals of a man, and stirreth all good graces from vs, as appeareth, Matth. 13.38 Hee did not many great workes there for their vnbelief's sake: and in the fourth Chapter to the Hebrewes, it is said: Vnto them was the Gospell preached, as also vnto vs: but the word that they heard, profited them not, because it was not mixt with faith in those that heard it. So that here wée may sée although we heare neuer so much, yet if wée bring not faith with vs, we shall neuer profit vnto repentance: for vnbeléefe taketh vp our hearts for Satan, and refuseth all the wholsome doctrine of Saluation, and doth so harden men in the wayes of sinne, that in the end they become past féeling, and cannot bée touched one whit, either with the iudgements or mercy of God, but count the one as blasts of winde, and made the other a couert for their filthinesse. You shall note some men, who when they haue heard their

their sinnes straightly ripped vp by the Word of God, and their iust damnation proued by the same, without spéedy and earnest repentance will breake out into these words of vnbeléefe. If this be as hée saith, God helpe vs. I hope it is not so: I trust I shall do well enough for all this, as long as I haue a good faith in God and do no body no harme: Shall I leaue my pleasures and my profit for their saying? What? do they thinke none shall bée saued but such as reade the Scriptures, and heare Sermons? God forbid, but those which do not go to heare Sermons, should be saued as well as they: why, may not one serue God as well at home at his house, hauing good Works and good Prayers, as by comming to the Church to heare Sermons and Seruice? Alas; these men stand too much in their owne light, and bewray what folly and ignorance is in them. For do they thinke to be saued by any other meanes than God hath appointed? or when God hath anouched any thing in his Word, will they except against it, and so make God a lyar? when God hath once set downe a thing, and proued it to their faces, will they yet reply, when God hath told vs, that the preaching of the Word is the ordinary meanes of our saluation, shall we hope to be saued, though we contemne it, and neuer (or very seldome) hear

it? Is not this plaine infidelity and vnbeléefe, that when God saith one thing, we will say another: when God saith yea, we will say no, I hope not so? Yea surely, that is it that stoppeth the way to Gods graces, and barreth vs out from repentance.

The second let is, the presumption of Gods mercy: for if men be sharply reproued for their sin, and exhorted to repentance, by and by they talke couertly, saying, God is mercifull, God is mercifull: as though God were made all of mercy, and that there were no iustice in him at all. And thus the wicked make Gods mercy an occasion to sinne. Which thing the Prophet Nahum in the first of his Prophecy doth sharply reproue: The Lord (saith he) is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and will not surely cleare the wicked. But because I haue spoken before of this presuming and misapplying of Gods mercie, I will here passe it ouer, and willing you to note it as one speciall let vnto Repentance.

The third hinderance is, the example of the multitude: for that doth hearten and embolden men vnto sinne: as when many Birds flicker and flocke together, they fall vpon the baite without any feare; but one or two alone will be afraid: euen so the examples of many sinne-companions do embolden men to run through

the

the ſnares of Sathan, without any miſtruſt. Therefore it is ſaid in Exod. 23. Thou ſhalt not follow a multitude to doe evill. This is the thing which hindereth a great number from God: for they never looke vp vnto God, or to his word, but ſtare vpon the common doings of moſt men, and examples of the world: thinking if they doe as the moſt men doe, and as their Fore-fathers haue done before them, they are cocke-ſure, and on an euen ground. And thereupon ariſeth their diuelliſh Proverbe: Do as the moſt men doe, and the feweſt will ſpeake ill of you. But they haue forgotten Saint Pauls Rule, Rom. 12 Faſhion not your ſelues like vnto this World. Theſe fellowes that ſtand vpon multitudes, will reaſon thus: We ſée none of the great ones of the world, none of the noble, none of the rich, none of the wiſe and prudent, receiue this doctrine, but onely a few ſhake-ragges, and beggerly raſcals; and therefore it is a token that it is nothing worth, and that it is doubtfull, and not for vs to meddle withall. Loe what thoughts may créepe into our heads, and how ſlily Sathan may trumpe in our way and blind-fold vs, and leade vs away in the darke, by doting vs with the example of the multitude. Therefore let vs take héed of thoſe pit-fals which Sathan layeth in our way, and not be carried away with thoſe thoughts

nd reasons. The wicked beare themselues in
and, that they shall win the game, and that the
ole goeth on their side, and there is nothing
ut crowing long before it bee day, and great
riumphing among them before any stroke bee
uen, and that because we are but a handfull of
eople, and they a great multitude, and that in
manner the whole world agreeth with them
o practise our death. Thus the diuell doth cast
mist before their eyes, and closely leads them
away from repentance. Therefore deere bre-
thren let vs stand fast in the Word of the Lord,
and not be carried away, and bowed quite down
with the raging streame of the multitude, but
let vs know it to be one especiall engine of Sa-
than whereby he driueth vs from repentance.

The fourth let vnto repentance is long cu-
stome of sin, for that taketh away all sense and
feeling of sinne, and maketh it, as it were, ano-
ther Nature vnto vs, so that wee may as well
alter nature, as shake it off, when it is once thus
souldred vnto vs through long custome. Ther-
fore it is said, Ier. 13.23. Can the black-Moore
change his skinne, or the Leopard his spots?
Then may you also doe good that are accusto-
med to doe evill. There the Prophet affirmeth
that it is as hard to cure an old disease, that is
bred in the bones, and to remedy a sinne tha
hath beene hatched and brought vp with vs, a
t

to wash a Black-Moze white, oz to change
spots of a Leopard, which cannot bee with
destroying of nature. And surely, try it
will, hee shall finde it as hard a matter to le
an old custome, whether it bee of swearing
gaming, of lying, of whoring, of euill comp
oz of any other sinne, as to wash an Æthiop
Therefoze it is written, Prou. 27. Though th
shouldest bray a fool in a morter, among wh
brayed with a pestell, yet will not his fooli
nesse depart from him. So that as long as
are in costome with sin, the owze of repentan
is barred against vs.

The fift hinderance is, long escaping of p
nishment, foz the wicked thereby are harden
in sinne, and driuen off from repentance: e
as an old theefe that hath stollen a long ti
and escaped both prison and gallowes, is a
meted moze boldly to proceed in his wickedne
thinking he shall so alwaies escape: So man
filthy and lose liuers goe forward in their a
bomination without repentance, thinking th
because God doth not incontinently puni
them, and shew some manifold iudgement a
signe of his wrath vpon them, therefoze th
shall be acquitted foz altogether. Whereas co
trariwise, if God should by and by strike th
downe as sone as they had sinned, by thund
ring vpon one, and lightening vpon ano

raigning fire and brimstone vpon the third, would make them afraid. Hereupon it is in 2 Pet. 3. 2. 4. This first vnderstanding, that re shal come in the last daies mockers, which l walke after their lusts, and say: Where is the mise of his commiug? for since the Fathers d, all things continue alike from the begin- g of the Creation. But let these men well w, that when God hath delayed a long e, and prolonged the terme of the wicked, engthe he will shew, that although he waited their repentance, yet he forgot not their mis- des, but registred them before him, and pac- them vp vpon a great heape to encrease the rour of his wrath.

The first hinderance is, the beholding of er mens ends: for when some men that haue d a wicked and an vngracious life, and haue e notorious sinners, euen to the world- rd, so that euery man could point at them; t if vpon their death-bed they can say a few d words, and cry God mercy, and say their yers, and forgiue all the world, and so dye etly, it is marueilous to heare how foolish ople of the world will exalt them, and iustifie m, saying; He made a very good end, as any n could make, he dyed as quiet as a lambe, set all things in good order before he dyed. reupon another wicked and monstrous

variet

barlet is encouraged to sinne. For thinke he, such a man liued as lowsely as I, or any me else, and yet he made a very good end, and wo may not I do so too? But alas, these mens ey are bleared; for to die quietly is not to die go ly: to cry God mercy for fashion, is not to be God mercifull: to say a few prayers from t teeth outward, is not to dye in the faith Christ: for many do all these, and yet dye mi rably.

The last let is, hope of long life: for whil men feed and beset themselues in this hope they are drunken in sinne, and deferre the da of repentance, as the rich man in the 12. of Luk dreaming of his long life, cast off all thought o God, and the other life, and of Christs com ming, and of all good things, and said with himselfe: Soule, thou hast much goods laid for many yeeres, liue at ease, eate, drinke, and take thy pastime. Thus the bleare-eyed men of this world, choake by repentance, and quite smother it, by doting themselues with hope of long life. Therefore, my deere brethren, I be seech you by the mercies of God, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, that none of all these common lets may stay you from speedy and vnfained repentance, but that you may ouer-slide them all: lest haply you being found without re pentance, and taken tardy in your sins, shoul

...rish, and be damned, according to Christs ...ence. Wherefore in conclusion, let vs with ...ly Ezechiah be afraid of Gods threatnings, ...ow aforehand, stand in awe of God, exa... our consciences, mourne for our sins, and ...ent inwardly, that when the wicked, who ...e swimmed in pleasure here below shall en... into their eternall paines, wee may then, I ..., there haue eternall peace and rest: that when ...esus Christ shall appeare from heauen with ... his Angels, we may haue crownes of glory, ... reigne with our God and our Sauiour his ...yme, and all his Saints and Angels, in the ...idst of all ioy, in the heauens for euermore. To ...e which ioy he bring vs all, which hath so ...erely bought vs, Iesus Christ the righteous. To whom with the Father, and the holy Ghost, be all honour, glory, praise, power, and dominion, now and for euermore. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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Book 1729

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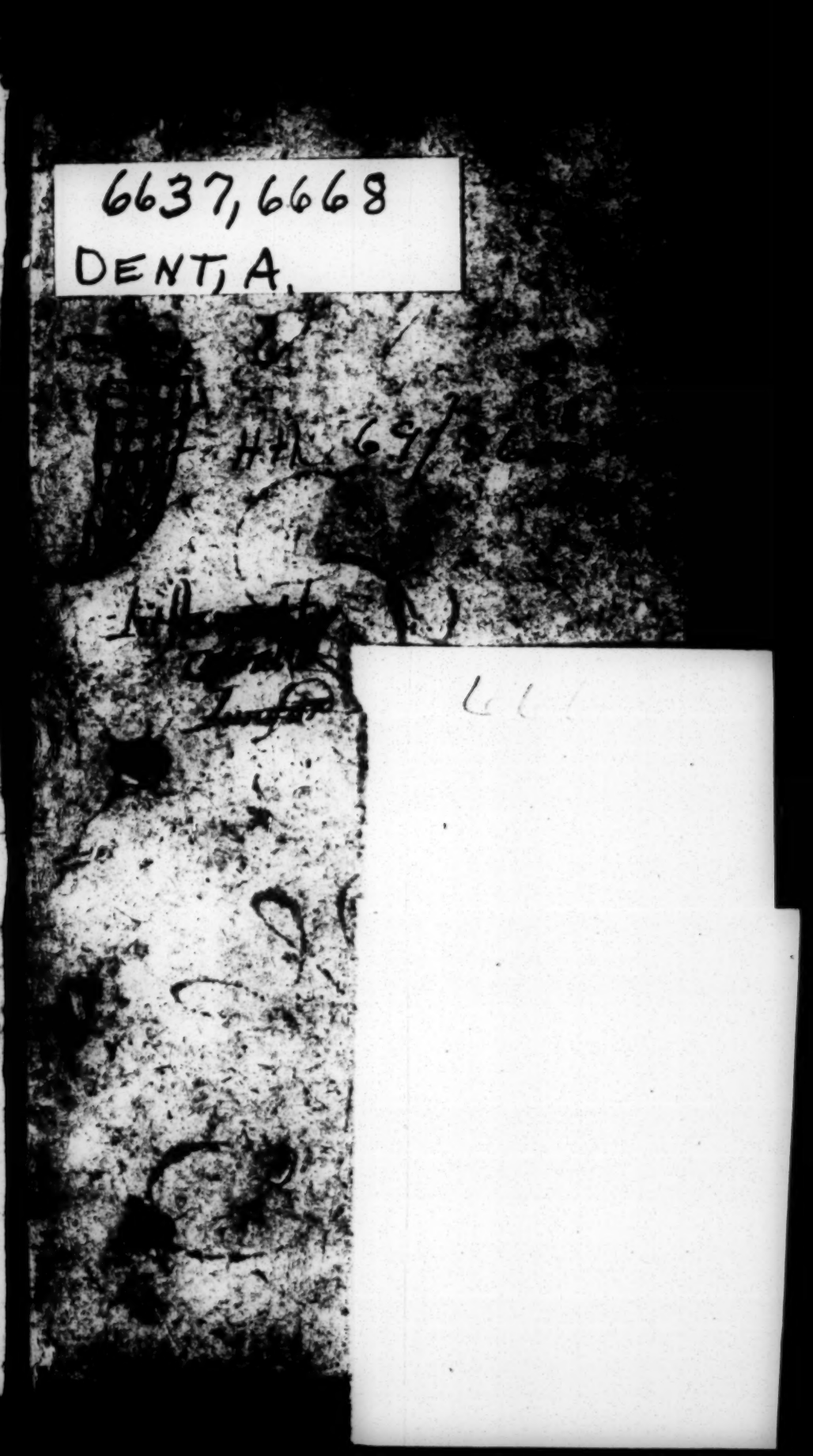
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